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Central Intelligence Bulletin

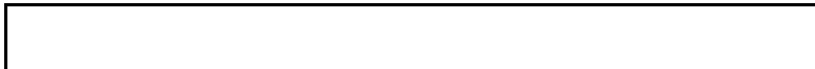
CONTENTS



25X1

LAOS: Government forces continue to make slow progress. (Page 3)

PAKISTAN: Awami League assemblymen (Page 4)



25X1

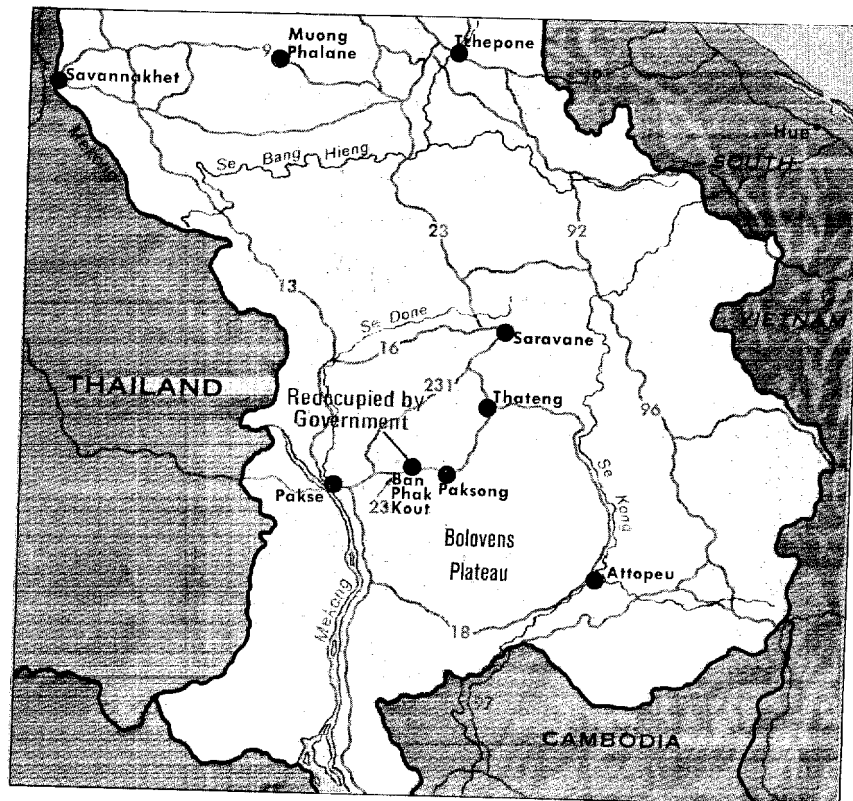
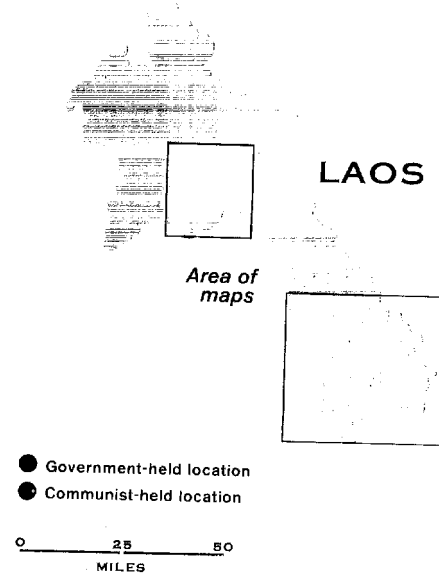
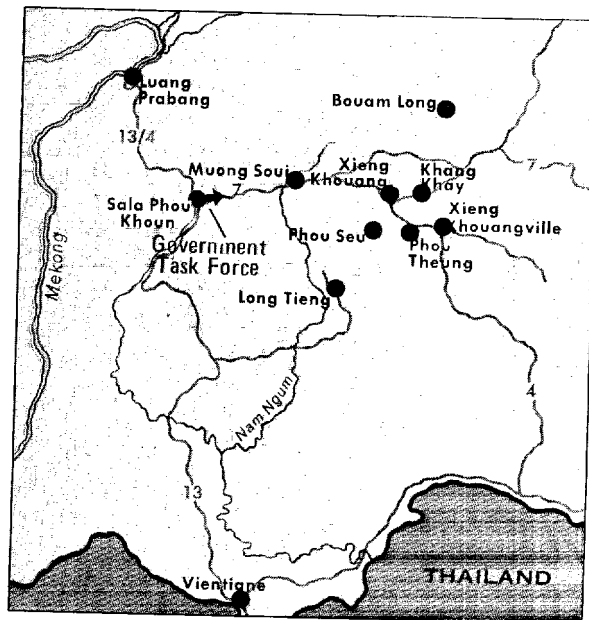
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LAOS: Government forces have continued to make slow progress in both north and south Laos.

General Vang Pao's irregular forces on the Plaine des Jarres have reported some heavy enemy shelling attacks and skirmishing, but they are continuing to consolidate their positions around the eastern portion of the Plaine. In addition, a three-battalion government task force has begun to move eastward down Route 7 toward Muong Soui, the former neutralist headquarters, which appears to be only lightly defended by the Communists.

In south Laos, government forces have occupied Ban Phak Kout on Route 23, about six miles west of Paksong. Stiff enemy resistance has turned back efforts to move on toward Paksong, and air observers report "many" new enemy positions around that town. Government forces conducting sweep operations west of Saravane captured a rice and ammunition cache after driving off an enemy company.

On the political scene, Souk Vongsak, the Pathet Lao envoy in Vientiane, has returned to Communist headquarters at Samneua for "consultations" after delivering a message from Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong. The message reiterates the Communists' determination to solve the Lao problem peacefully, but vows to continue fighting until government attacks on the Plaine and in south Laos are "smashed." Before leaving, Souk singled out the attacks on the Plaine as having "rendered the situation more complicated and explosive," and tied his departure to Prime Minister Souvanna's lack of "good will" and to US "sabotage."

25X1

9 Aug 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

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SECRET

NOTES

PAKISTAN: The announcement on 7 August that only 88 of 167 Awami League members elected to the National Assembly from East Pakistan last December will be permitted to take their seats is unlikely to improve the possibility of reconciliation between the two wings. The other 79 members are to be tried by military court and, if not cleared, their seats will be declared vacant and new elections held. Because at least several and possibly many of the 88 acceptable deputies are not expected to take their seats, the government could face a new credibility crisis when and if the assembly meets with less than 50 percent of the originally elected members from East Pakistan present.

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9 Aug 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

4

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